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# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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## U.S. Trade Office Outlines Steps To Facilitate African Trade

By Susan Ellis  
Washington File  
Staff Writer

Washington -- International trade can be a powerful engine for economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa, U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman told an audience in Washington February 7. For Africa to benefit, however, many African countries will need to improve their infrastructure and simplify customs procedures to facilitate trade



**Rob Portman**  
**US Trade Representative**

with other countries on the continent, he said.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA),

Portman said the United States needs to do all it can "to help African countries to participate more effectively in the global trading system."

Trading with the United States has been made easier, he said, by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), passed by Congress on a bipartisan vote in 2000 and extended thereafter. Under this legislation, the United States

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## Bush, Secretary-General Annan Discuss Sudan, U.N. Reform

Bush, Secretary-General Annan Discuss Sudan, U.N. Reform

President Bush and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan discussed Sudan, the Middle East and reform efforts at the United Nations in a White House meeting February 13.



**President Bush (R) meets with Secretary General Kofi Annan at the White House**

Speaking at the White House after the meeting, Bush said he told Annan about his February 10 meeting with Rebecca Garang, the minister of transportation, roads and bridges in the government of Southern Sudan who also is the widow of the

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## Embassy Grant Expands Civil Service College Library Collection

The U.S. Embassy has donated a collection of nearly 100 books on a wide range of professional and technical subjects to the Library of

Ethiopia's Civil Service College. The book donation, made possible by a grant from the Embassy's Public Affairs Section, provides the

College's library with authoritative basic texts in areas ranging from criminal investigation to macroeconomics, and from urban planning



**The Civil Service College's Dr. Samson and Embassy Information Officer Robert Arbuckle review some of the donated books.**

to taxation management. College officials, led by Academic Vice President Dr. Samson Kassahun, thanked the Embassy for this significant addition to the College Library's collection at a ceremony on Tuesday, February 14. Representing the Embassy, Information Officer Robert H. Arbuckle noted the key importance of the College's work to the future of Ethiopia's civil service and expressed hope that the kind of collaboration between the Embassy and the College represented by the grant would continue to flourish. ♦

## U.S. Trade Office Outlines Steps To Facilitate African Trade . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

has opened its market "to virtually all products from the 37 AGOA-eligible countries," he said.

Portman said that Africa's current share of world trade is only 2 percent. "If Africa were to increase that by just one percentage point -- to 3 percent -- it would generate additional export revenues of \$70 billion a year," he said. "That is nearly three times the amount of annual assistance that sub-Saharan Africa receives from all donors."

"Some African governments are doing the right things to spark investment, reduce barriers to trade

and empower the private sector," Portman said.

The World Bank, he said, ranked Rwanda as one of the top 12 reformers in the world in 2005 and also commended reforms in Mozambique, Ghana, Senegal and Tanzania.

Portman also listed some actions taken by the administration to facilitate African trade.

The United States is working with the five countries of the Southern African Customs Union -- Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland -- to establish a deeper economic partnership. "Together, these coun-

tries constitute our largest market in sub-Saharan Africa, with two-way trade reaching nearly \$11 billion in 2005," he said.

In addition, the United States supports greater regional economic integration in Africa. Portman said African countries trade less with each other than do countries in any other region of the world. Confusing customs procedures and the lack of good transport links between African countries contribute to this, he said, adding that "it takes longer and costs more to transport Tanzanian cotton to mills in neighboring Kenya than it does to bring in cotton from Asia."

*(Continued on page 3)*

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## U.S. Trade Office Outlines Steps To Facilitate African Trade . . .

(Continued from page 2)

To promote greater economic integration that will help increase regional trade while at the same time creating larger markets and increasing economies of scale and competitiveness, Portman said that the United States is "working closely with regional organizations such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa [COMESA] and the West African Economic and Monetary Union [WAEMU], through mechanisms such as trade and investment framework agreements [TIFAs] to help our African partners reduce tariffs, improve customs procedures, harmonize standards, address transportation bottlenecks and coordinate policies on finance, services, investments and telecommunications."

### AFRICA AND THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT ROUND

Portman also said the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda, also known as the Doha Round, is central to Africa's future. An ambitious outcome could give African countries the improved access to markets and greater competitiveness they need to boost development and decrease poverty.

The United States has put "bold and detailed proposals" on the table, he said, including an agricultural proposal that calls for major

reform in global farm product trade and real reductions in U.S. subsidies and trade-distorting domestic supports.

"We are willing to undertake these difficult reforms, but we can only win the political support necessary to do so if others match our ambition by similarly cutting subsidies, trade-distorting farm supports and tariffs," he said.

"African exports, particularly farm exports, [are] where many African countries have a comparative advantage, and they have a lot to gain if we can bring the Doha Round together," Portman said.

"Working together, we reached agreements on a number of development-related issues that the Africa Group had placed high on the Doha agenda, including cotton, duty-free/quota-free market access for least-developed countries and aid for trade."

On cotton, he said, "We have already followed through on one of our commitments, with Congress's vote last week to eliminate the Step 2 cotton marketing program, an export subsidy program for cotton."

Portman emphasized that progress on development is contingent on a successful conclusion to the Doha Round, saying, "Unless we conclude Doha, many of these

development provisions will not be realized."

Addressing American company representatives in the audience, he urged them to make use of partnerships and contacts with African governments and companies to encourage stronger African support for domestic economic reforms and a successful Doha agreement.

Portman urged U.S. companies to take a second look at African economies like Rwanda, Mozambique, Ghana, Senegal and Tanzania as they consider new investments or areas of operation. "If the international business community does not respond positively when countries move in the right direction," he said, "we risk sending the wrong signal and losing momentum in advancing economic reform and opening markets."

A transcript ([http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document\\_Library/Transcripts/2006/February/asset\\_upload\\_file596\\_8921.pdf](http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Transcripts/2006/February/asset_upload_file596_8921.pdf)) (PDF, 8 pages) of Portman's remarks is available on the USTR Web site.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## Bush, Secretary-General Annan Discuss Sudan, U.N. Reform

(Continued from page 1)  
late John Garang.

"[S]he and I had a long discussion not only about the Darfur region, but about implementing the North-South Accords," Bush said, adding that he appreciates Annan's leadership on the issue. (For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).)

The president said he also was interested in the secretary-general's thoughts about structural and management reform at the United Nations, as well as the reform of the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Annan said he agrees with Bush that the council needs reform "and it should be done as soon as possible," adding that the president of the General Assembly is working to have the reforms done "by this month." (For more information, see U.S. and United Nations Reform (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/>

[international\\_security/UNGA\\_2005.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html)).

As for broader reform, Annan said "there are quite a lot of things that we're going to do."



**President Bush welcomes Rebecca Garang, the Minister of Transportation, Roads and Bridges of the Government of Southern Sudan, to the Oval Office, Feb. 10, 2006 at the White House. White House photo by Eric Draper**

Regarding Sudan, the secretary-general called for an "effective security presence on the ground" in Darfur to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs) and allow humanitarian workers access to those in need. "[T]his is an issue where all governments have to play their role," he said.

Annan also called for the Palestinian group Hamas to transform itself "into a political party and work with the international community and the Israeli government."

Hamas won a majority in the recent Palestinian elections. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Jan/30-409269.html>).)

The secretary-general also said he hopes that Iran will indicate its willingness to continue negotiations over its nuclear program.

For additional information, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/interna->

[tional\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html)).

Following is the transcript of remarks by Bush and Annan:

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦



## United States Contributes \$203.8 Million to U.N. Refugee Agency

The United States has contributed an initial \$203.8 million toward the 2006 operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), according to a statement by State Department spokesman Sean McCormack.

Ellen Sauerbrey, assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration, presented the contribution to High Commissioner Antonio Guterres during a February 8 Geneva meeting held to discuss key refugee issues.

Of the \$203.8 million, \$200 million directly supports UNHCR's annual program activities. This funding will allow UNHCR to aid about 19 million refugees and other persons of concern.

Text of the State Department statement follows:

(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

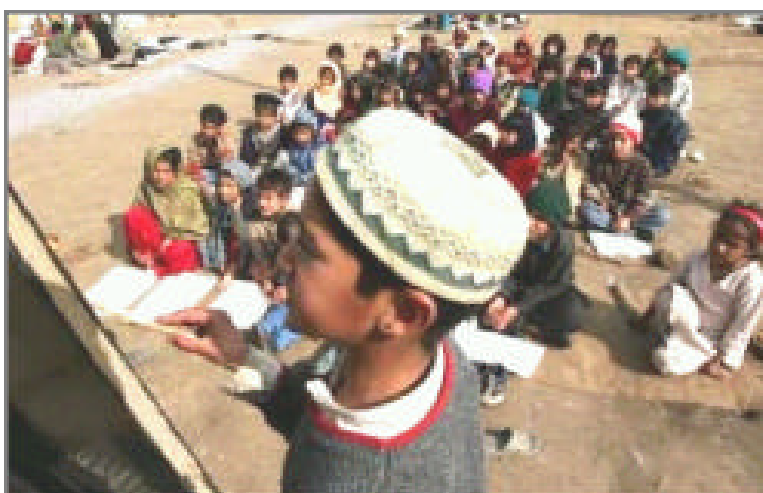
Office of the Spokesman  
February 8, 2006

STATEMENT BY SEAN MCCORMACK, SPOKESMAN

U.S. Contributes \$203.8 Million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The United States is pleased to announce an initial contribution of \$203.8 million toward the 2006

operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Ellen Sauerbrey, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, presented this contribution to High Commissioner Antonio Guterres in a meeting in Geneva today in which they discussed key refugee issues.



**A Kashmiri refugee child reads off a blackboard in an open-air primary school on the outskirts of the town of Balakot, some 30 km (19 miles) northwest of the earthquake-devastated city of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir February 13, 2006. Winter weather has made life more difficult for survivors of last year massive earthquake in South Asia where more than two million people have been living in tents or crude shelters patched together from ruined homes. REUTERS/Thierry Roge**

Of the \$203.8 million, \$200 million directly supports UNHCR's Annual Program activities as indicated below. This funding will allow UNHCR to aid approximately 19 million refugees and other persons of concern.

- Africa \$104.0 million
- Central Asia/Southwest Asia/ North Africa/Middle East \$25.5 million

- Europe \$18.0 million
- Asia and Pacific \$10.5 million
- Western Hemisphere \$6.5 million
- Global Operations \$15.0 million
- Headquarters \$16.0 million

- Operational Reserve activities \$4.5 million

In addition, \$3.8 million will support UNHCR efforts to strengthen its refugee protection capacity overseas.

The protection and care of refugees and victims of conflict in places such as Chad, Burundi, Pakistan and Colombia and the pursuit of durable solutions for them are shared international responsibilities. The United States is the single largest donor country to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, doing our part to protect and as-

sist refugees throughout the world. We urge other donors to strengthen their efforts in support of the programs of the UNHCR.

(end text)

*(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## U.S. To Issue Student Visas 120 Days Ahead of Start of Classes

The United States has extended the length of time foreign students may be issued student visas, and will issue student visas up to 120 days before classes begin, as compared to 90 days under previous regulations, the State Department announced February 14.

Under the new regulations, students applying for initial-entry F-1 (academic student), F-2 (spouse or child of F-1) and M-1 (vocational training) and M-2 (spouse or child of M-1) visas now may be issued those visas up to 120 days before their academic program start date.

"This change reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of our citizens and our visitors by keeping our borders secure, while also taking significant steps to ensure that our doors remain open to those seeking to visit, study or conduct business in the U.S.," according to the announcement.

The changes apply only to students entering the United States for the first time, the announcement said.

Continuing students may apply for new F or M visas at any time, as long as they have maintained their student status and their student and exchange visitor information (SEVIS) records are current. J-1 (exchange visitor) and J-2 (spouse or child of J-1) visas may be issued to J-1 visitors at any time before the beginning of their programs.

The measure is part of the Rice-Chertoff joint vision for secure borders and open doors in the information age, a three-part plan to welcome visitors to the United

States without compromising security, announced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff January 17. The joint vision aims to renew America's welcome with improved technology and efficiency; develop travel documents for the 21st century; and create "smarter screening" of travelers. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/17-781544.html>) and fact sheet (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/17-319770.html>).)

Announcing the joint vision, Rice said the United States is working to renew its welcome to foreign visitors and is giving "top priority" to getting visas into the hands of prospective students. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/19-941422.html>).)

For information on studying in the United States, see the State Department Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs EducationUSA (<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>) Web site and the electronic journal, College and University Education in the United States (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1105/ijse/ijse1105.htm>).

Additional information on student visas ([http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1268.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html)) and the visa application process is available on the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Web site.

Following is the text of the State Department media note with further details:

February 14, 2006

Student Visas: Secure Borders and Open Doors in the Information Age

The Department of State is pleased to announce we have extended the length of time foreign students may be issued student visas. This is one of the elements of the recently announced Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision which will enhance border security while streamlining security processes and facilitating travel for visitors to the United States.

Students applying for initial-entry F-1, F-2, and M-1 and M-2 visas may now be issued those visas up to 120 days before their academic program start date (as compared to 90 days under previous regulations). J-1 and J-2 visitors may be issued visas at any time before the beginning of their programs.

These changes apply only to initial-entry students. Continuing students may apply for new F or M visas at any time, as long as they have maintained their student status and their Student and Exchange Visitor Information (SEVIS) records are current.

As part of the Joint Vision announced by Secretaries Rice and Chertoff, this change reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of our citizens and our visitors by keeping our borders secure, while also taking significant steps to ensure that our doors remain open to those seeking to visit, study or conduct business in the U.S. ♦

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## Mrs. Bush, Heading Olympic Delegation, Spreads Message of Goodwill

By Michael Jay Friedman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Arriving in Italy as the head of the official U.S. delegation to the 2006 Winter Olympic Games at Turin, U.S. first lady Laura Bush spread a message of goodwill. In meetings with Pope Benedict XVI, with the Italian and American press and at an event supporting breast cancer research in Italy, Mrs. Bush stressed the need to relieve disease, hunger and injustice.

In their February 9 meeting, which Mrs. Bush called a "huge privilege," the first lady and the pontiff discussed Mrs. Bush's January visit to Nigeria's St. Mary's Hospital, a Catholic institution that partners with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to provide care and anti-retroviral treatment for AIDS patients.

They also discussed such Rome-based international hunger relief organizations as Feed the Hungry and the World Food Program. Mrs. Bush later observed that the United States provides about half of the money or food distributed by the latter group. She also pointed out that \$30 can feed a child for a year, and that AIDS medications cannot work without proper nutrition.

Mrs. Bush said that Pope Benedict expressed concern over terror

ism and expressed his hopes for peace and tolerance.

"I know that the United States and the Holy See share many of the same goals of trying to relieve suffering around the world, either because of AIDS or because of hunger and injustice," she told the Italian publication La Stampa.



**Laura Bush poses for photos with 2006 U.S. Winter Olympic athletes in Turin, Italy, Friday, Feb. 10, 2006 before the Opening Ceremony. White House photo by Shealah Craighead**

The first lady also attended a Rome event sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Founded by a personal friend of the first lady, the Komen Foundation and its network of affiliates in the United States, Puerto Rico, Italy and Germany raises breast cancer awareness and -- through such events as the Race for the Cure, a series of 100 annual running races with more than 1 million yearly participants -- raises funds to support research toward a cure.

Bush praised the financial contributions of the U.S. government and individual Americans in support of "exciting and hopeful" research.

En route to the games, the first lady stopped at Aviano Air Force base, where she thanked Italian forces for their support and sacrifice in the war against terrorism.

She similarly thanked the American servicemen and women present, telling them "You've earned the respect and the gratitude of the American people."

Recounting the achievements of airmen and soldiers stationed in Aviano and in Vicenza, Italy, Bush praised their efforts in training Afghan National Guard members, responding to the recent earthquake in Pakistan and East Asian tsunami and continuing to maintain peace and stability in the Balkans.

At several stops, the first lady introduced other members of the official Olympic delegation, including U.S. Ambassador to Italy Ronald Spigoli and four former U.S. Olympians: figure skater Dorothy Hamill, speed skater Eric Heiden; gymnast Kerry Strug and bobsledder (and former National Football League star) Herschel Walker.

At Turin, the first lady, Italian President Azeglio Ciampi and a crowd of some 35,000 attended the Opening Ceremony, which includes a traditional parade of athletes from more than 80 participating nations. ♦

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## Meet August Wilson, a Playwright for an American Century

By Michael J. Bandler  
Washington File Staff Writer



August Wilson

Washington -- In one of the last stage directions that American playwright August Wilson wrote, for productions of his final work,

Radio Golf, he described a central character's burst of laughter as that of "a man who has been bleeding and didn't know he was cut. It is the laugh of a man who has severed his bonds and is truly free."

It could have been a self-portrait.

Wilson died of liver cancer on October 2, 2005, less than two months after revealing his terminal illness to the world.

"It's not like poker - you can't throw your hand in," he told his hometown newspaper, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, in late summer 2005. "I've lived a blessed life. I'm ready."

Before his death, February was a busy month for Wilson as he made numerous appearances as part of Black History Month observances.

By every possible measurement, August Wilson stood tall among American playwrights of any background, ethnicity or race -- in the same class as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee.

He accomplished something that only O'Neill attempted - and Wil-

son beat him at that game. The early 20th-century Irish-American dramatist completed four plays generally regarded as linked. Wilson completed a cycle of 10 plays sprawled across a century of the black experience in America, one work for each decade.

Radio Golf, set in the 1990s, seen already in productions in three states, with a fourth pending this spring, completes the cycle.

Wilson once observed that his plays were "about love, honor, duty, betrayal -- things humans have written about since the beginning of time." His goal was, as he put it, "to take culture and put it onstage, demonstrate it is capable of sustaining you. There is no idea that can't be contained by life: Asian life, European life, certainly black life." He was, in essence, the quintessential universalist.

The theme of Black History Month 2006 is "Celebrating Community," which is exactly what Wilson did in the stories he told, the heritage and lives he portrayed and the often stark realities he confronted. All of the drama that unfolded was rooted in his own community, the "Hill district" of his native Pittsburgh.

All but one play glimpsed this venue in microcosm through the folks who lived on "the Hill." (The exception, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, is set in a Chicago recording studio in 1927, in the heyday of the Jazz Age.) Characters come and go (and some reappear). The historical ebb and flow of a nation serves as a backdrop and the changes that took place on a broader, universal scale are de-

picted with passion and poignancy. Along the way, two of his plays - Fences and The Piano Lesson - received Pulitzer Prizes.

Wilson was born in April 1945. His formal education ended at 15, but he continued to absorb information and skills at the neighborhood public library. In his late teens, he began writing poetry. After becoming involved with a local theater group and art gallery, he turned to playwriting, but gave it up for a number of years. In the late 1970s, he took a job at a science museum in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was asked to adapt Native American folktales into children's theater.

A playwright was born.

Ma Rainey centers on an actual black blues singer of the 1920s and reflects the hardships of life amidst the racism of the era. His next play, Fences, confronts American society in the late 1950s, when times were changing, but not for everyone. As Wilson went forward and backward in time, he always kept his eye on the evolution that had or had not taken place.

Some of his works have a narrow focus, on beleaguered characters within families or the community. Others are more expansive, such as his ninth play, Gem of the Ocean, set in 1904, in which myth and magic realism combine against the backdrop of a multigenerational history. The Piano Lesson also is rooted in histories - of a family and of a race - as two siblings in 1930s America battle over a treasured heirloom from decades before.

*(Continued on page 23)*



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## Proposed Military Budget Focuses on Speed, Agility, War on Terror

Washington -- President Bush sent a \$439.3 billion defense budget request to Congress February 6 for fiscal year 2007 that reflects a 7 percent increase over the funding authorized for fiscal year 2006.

The budget request for the fiscal year beginning October 1 reflects the Defense Department's goals of defending the United States, fighting terrorism and deterring future adversaries.

The budget proposal is the first step in a long, complex legislative process. Before the federal government can spend any money, the House of Representatives and Senate must pass final spending bills and the president must sign them.

Speaking at the National Press Club February 2 in advance of the release of the new budget request, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the Defense budget has gone up every year in the last five years. "We have been able to fund the important things that are needed," he said.

"It is a sizeable amount of money," Rumsfeld said. The Pentagon continues to invest money in military capabilities needed to conduct the irregular warfare in which the United States currently is engaged. Military analysts expect that type of warfare to be dominant in coming years.

An executive summary of the 2007 budget proposal issued by the department said the funding request continues a shift in emphasis "away from the static posture and forces of the last century toward the highly mobile and expeditionary, and accompanying war

fighting capabilities, needed in the century ahead."

As Rumsfeld told the National Press Club audience, the department has "gone more towards speed and away from mass. We've gone towards agility and we've gone towards precision." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=February&x=20060202181525sjhtrop0.7990686&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

### PROPOSED BUDGET WOULD ALLOW COMMANDERS MORE OPTIONS

Instead of defending the United States with what the Pentagon now describes as "a one-size-fits-all system of deterrence centered around massive nuclear retaliation," many more options will be available to commanders to deal with rogue powers, terrorist networks and rising states. This approach would require a new system of basing U.S. military forces so that they can swiftly surge to the global trouble spots.

U.S. Special Forces, those who are specially trained to drop into such crisis areas, would be a primary beneficiary in this budget request. The department is seeking to increase active duty Special Operations Forces battalions by 33 percent and to expand civil affairs and psychological operations personnel also by 33 percent. The Pentagon increasingly will look to the Marine Corps for special operations work and special Navy teams will be getting an added capability to operate on rivers, according to executive summary.

Because the military has been successful in winning battles, but not as strong in detecting the warning signs that lead up to them, the Bush administration is seeking more money for intelligence collection, including more unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, the summary explained.

The proposed budget also calls for improved missile defense capabilities, including improved command-and-control functions, better satellite communication, and new countermeasures against "the threat of catastrophic weapons." The department is seeking \$10.4 billion in the 2007 budget request to produce and field more ground- and sea-based missile interceptors and for two more forward-deployed mobile radars.

The proposed budget also seeks \$10.4 billion to buy F-22 and F/A-18 E/F aircraft and for the continuing development and the first procurement of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The Navy is seeking \$11.2 billion in the new fiscal year for two DDX destroyers (the so-called "next generation" experimental destroyer), two littoral combat ships, a Virginia-class fast attack submarine, an amphibious assault ship, and logistics ship.

The Army wants \$3.7 billion in the 2007 budget for the Army's Future Combat System. The plan is to provide money to accelerate the Army's creation of more modular and deployable units and headquarters.

*(Continued on page 23)*

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## U.S. Welcomes Mideast Democracy, Rejects Terror Groups

By David Shelby  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States welcomes the growth of democratic activity in the Middle East and is prepared to deal with governments and parties of all political tendencies, but will not maintain relations with terrorist organizations such as Hamas, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch.

"We don't pick winners," Welch told reporters in Washington February 9, referring to the U.S. stance toward elections in other countries. "The United States believes that societies should open up for their people. Open up in terms of their social and educational experiences, in terms of economic opportunity, and yes in terms of political participation."

Noting that the United States has good relations with several governments and parties with an Islamic character, he added, "There are no objections on our part to dealing with anybody's political tendencies."

Speaking about Hamas, however, he said "we cannot have a relationship with a terrorist organization regardless of whether it's in government or out of government."

Welch said that Hamas now must choose how to fulfill the political mandate it won at the polls, but that if it wants effective relations with the international community, it must respect the principles laid out in the January 30 statement by the Quartet for Middle East

peace, which includes the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Jan/30-409269.html>).)



**David Welch, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs**

"It's up to Hamas ... to decide how it will discharge its mandate to seek to improve the life of the Palestinian people and realize their aspirations," he said. "As far as we're concerned, the way forward is very clear."

He said, "If Hamas wishes to take into account the views of the international community, they were very clearly stated."

The Quartet statement said the new Palestinian government must be committed to nonviolence, recognize Israel's right to exist and accept previous agreements and

obligations adopted by the Palestinian Authority.

Welch said that the United States is reviewing its assistance relationship with the Palestinian Authority and inevitably will adjust that relationship when and if a Hamas-led government takes office, given Hamas' status as a terrorist organization.

He expressed skepticism that Arab governments would step in to provide Hamas with financial support if it fails to accept the principles laid out by the Quartet. "The principles of the Quartet on this matter are very clear. I'm confident that Arab governments will take that into account," he said.

A transcript (<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/60802.htm>) of Welch's briefing is available on the State Department Web site.

Text of the January 30 Quartet statement (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/60068.htm>) is available on the State Department Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy in the region, see Middle East and North Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/>).

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## Bush Says Muslims Turning Against Terrorists

Washington -- The number of U.S. allies in the global War on Terror is growing and Muslims are turning against terrorists, whose tactics usually kill and maim innocents and fellow Muslims, President Bush says.

The president gave his assessment of the war against terrorism in a speech to the National Guard Association February 9.

Critics, who predicted his strategy of taking the fight to the terrorists would drive away international support, have found that the opposite has happened, Bush said.

"Today more governments are co-operating in the fight against terror than ever before," the president said. And "many nations that once turned a blind eye to terror are now helping lead the fight against it," he added, calling this a "most significant development."

The president said that at the time of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, only three governments -- one of which was Pakistan -- recognized the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which gave sanctuary to terrorists. But now Pakistani soldiers "are risking their lives in the hunt for al-Qaida," he said.

The president also quoted Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf as saying, "Terrorism threatens to destabilize all modern societies. It cannot be condoned for any reason or cause."

Saudi Arabia, Bush said, has changed from a place where al-Qaida fund-raisers and facilitators plied their trade. Noting the Riyadh bombings of May 2003, he said, now the Saudi government recog-

nizes that it is a prime terrorist target.

Since May 2003 bombings, Bush said, "Saudi forces have killed or captured nearly all the terrorists on their most-wanted list. They've reduced the flow of money to terror groups and arrested hundreds of radical fighters bound for Iraq."



**President Bush delivers a speech on the War on Terror in Washington February 9, 2006.**

The president said that the terrorists "cannot hide the inhumanity of their ideology."

Since 9/11, he noted, the majority of terrorist victims have been innocent Muslims. In the cities of Riyadh, Istanbul (Turkey), Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt), Jakarta, and Bali (Indonesia), all sites of terrorist attacks, "the people of those countries are starting to turn against the terrorists," he said.

"When people in the Arab world see al-Qaida murdering Iraqi children or blowing up mourners in an Iraqi

mosque, their outrage grows," Bush said.

After dozens were killed in November 2005 in the bombing of a Palestinian wedding in Amman, Jordan, Jordanians protested in the streets. One demonstrator, Bush said, carried a sign calling the attack, "Jordan's 9/11," while others chanted, "This is not Islamic. This is terrorism."

When it became known that the author of the attack was the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, his own tribe denounced him, Bush said, saying they "disown him until Judgment Day." Zarqawi is the leader of the terrorist group, al-Qaida in Iraq.

"Ultimately, the only way to defeat the terrorists is to defeat their dark vision of hatred and fear by spreading the hope of freedom to troubled regions of the world," the president said.

The United States still has a long way to go in spreading "the hope of liberty across the broader Middle East," Bush said. But the effort is necessary, he said, because free nations "don't wage wars of aggression ... [and] don't give safe haven to terrorists." Instead, they "replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against the terrorists."

The president gave details about a 2002 terrorist plot against the United States that was foiled through cooperation with Southeast Asian governments.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060209-2.html>) of Bush's remarks is available on the White House Web site. ♦

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## Bush, Jordan's King Abdullah Reject Violence Over Cartoons

President Bush welcomed Jordan's King Abdullah to the White House to discuss developments in the Middle East region as well as the violent reaction to published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

Speaking to the press February 8 after their meeting, Bush said he wanted to make clear to people around the world that the United States believes in welcoming people of all faiths, but also believes in a free press.

"With freedom comes the responsibility to be thoughtful about others," he said.

Bush said that he and Jordan's monarch both reject violence "as a way to express discontent with what may be printed in the free press," and he called upon world governments to "stop the violence, to be respectful, to protect property, [and] protect the lives of innocent diplomats who are serving their countries overseas."

King Abdullah, while condemning the cartoons as vilifying the Prophet Mohammed and attacking Muslim sensibilities, also said "those that want to protest should do it thoughtfully, articulately, [and] express their views peacefully."

"When we see protests, when we see destruction, when we see violence, especially if it ends up taking the lives of innocent people, it's completely unacceptable," he said.

The king also said he preferred the term "acceptance" to

"tolerance" as the means of advancing relations between those of different faiths.

"We need to accept our common humanity and our common values, and I hope that lessons can be learned from this dreadful issue, that we can move forward as hu-



**President George W. Bush listens as King Abdullah of Jordan makes remarks Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2006, during a photo opportunity in the Oval Office. The two leaders took the opportunity to urge an end to recent violence over caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. White House photo by Eric Draper**

manity and truly try to strive together as friends and as neighbors to bring a better world to all," he said.

King Abdullah also said he appreciates President Bush's "vision and desire" for peace and stability in the Middle East.

For additional information, see The Middle East: A Vision for the

Future ([http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision.html)).

Following is the transcript of the two leaders' remarks to reporters: (begin transcript)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
February 8, 2006

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH OF JORDAN IN PHOTO OPPORTUNITY  
The Oval Office  
9:26 A.M. EST

PRESIDENT BUSH: Your Majesty, welcome back. I have had two good discussions with His Majesty. Last night His Majesty and the Crown Prince came to have dinner with Laura and me and some members of Congress, and we had a really good discussion. We had a little time by ourselves to talk strategically about the world and our deep desire for this world to be peaceful.

Of course we talked about Iraq, Iran, the Palestinian territories. I appreciate your vision and your desire to achieve a better world for the people in your neighborhood.

We also talked about a topic that requires a lot of discussion and a lot of sensitive thought, and that is the reaction to the cartoons. I first want to make it very clear to people around the world that ours is a

*(Continued on page 13)*



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## Bush, Jordan's King Abdullah Reject Violence Over Cartoons . . .

*(Continued from page 12)*

nation that believes in tolerance and understanding. In America we welcome people of all faiths. One of the great attributes of our country is that you're free to worship however you choose in the United States of America.

Secondly, we believe in a free press. We also recognize that with freedom comes responsibilities. With freedom comes the responsibility to be thoughtful about others. Finally, I have made it clear to His Majesty and he made it clear to me that we reject violence as a way to express discontent with what may be printed in a free press. I call upon the governments around the world to stop the violence, to be respectful, to protect property, protect the lives of innocent diplomats who are serving their countries overseas.

And so, Your Majesty, thank you for coming. I'm proud to share the moment with you.

KING ABDULLAH: Thank you very much for your kind words. And I would just like to echo what the President

said. We've had some very fruitful discussions, and we're appreciative of the vision and the desire that the President has for peace and stability in our part of the world. He has always strived to make life better for all of us in the Middle East, and I tremendously appreciate that role.



**A French Muslim woman protests against cartoons of Prophet Mohammed published in several European newspapers in Strasbourg February 11, 2006. The cartoons have sparked protests across the Muslim world. REUTERS/Vincent Kessler**

The issue of the cartoons, again, and with all respect to press freedoms, obviously, anything that vilifies the Prophet Mohammed -- upon him or attacks Muslim sensibilities, I believe needs to be condemned. At the same time, those that want to protest should do it thoughtfully, articulately, express their views peacefully. When we see protests -- when we see de-

struction, when we see violence, especially if it ends up taking the lives of innocent people, is completely unacceptable. Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, is a religion of peace, tolerance, moderation.

And we have to continue to ask ourselves, what type of world do we want for our children? I too often hear the word used as, tolerance. And tolerance is such an awful word. If we are going to strive to move forward in the future, the word that we should be talking about is acceptance. We need to accept our common humanity and our common values. And I hope that lessons can be learned from this dreadful issue, that we can move forward as humanity, and truly try to strive together, as friends and as neighbors, to bring a better world to all.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Your Majesty. I appreciate it.

(end transcript)

*(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## Combat Hate Speech with Dialogue, Not Suppression, Scholar Says

By Sara Feuerstein  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Democratic societies that champion free speech must tackle the issue of hate speech. In a February 14 webchat, law professor Michael Curtis said that dialogue and social pressure can be effective methods of limiting hate speech.

Hate speech is defined as speech intended to harm, threaten, or provoke violence against someone based on race, ethnicity, nationality, belief system, sexual orientation or disability, through written or oral communication. Countries treat the issue differently.

U.S. law provides "fairly broad protection from government action punishing speech in the public domain," said Curtis, who teaches constitutional law, free speech and legal and constitutional history at Wake Forest Law School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

People have the right to criticize political leaders as well as religious leaders and religious ideas, he said.

"Under current interpretations of our Constitution, I do not think the government could suppress criticisms or hate speech that referred to large groups -- whether based on race, gender, economic class, or whatever -- in newspapers, speeches in public parks, etc.," he said.

However, he said, the rules are different with regard to public

schools and at work, or when the speech is focused on a particular person or student. "Our Constitutional law allows the government to protect people from direct threats and intimidation," Curtis noted.



Professor Michael Curtis

For example, the Ku Klux Klan -- historically a group devoted to racism and bigotry against all sorts of people -- "could meet in a public park, burn a cross [a Klan symbol] and express its racist or other ideas," Curtis said. "The government could, however, punish burning a cross on someone else's property as a threat or intimidation."

Because the law protects people against a hostile work environment, signs or buttons with offensive racial, religious and similar epithets could be banned at the workplace or at school, he said.

"I am sure speech is not harmless," Curtis said. "Words can cause harm. The question is how to respond."

For example, he said, "bans can simply make hate speech more subtle, clever, and effective. They can allow those punished to wrap themselves in the mantle of victims of repression."

In the webchat, Curtis said it does not necessarily require government intervention to discourage hate speech. "People can and do express strong condemnation of racist speech, for example, and

strong public disapproval makes people less likely to utter it," he said.

"In general I do think that social conventions limit speech," he said. "For most of us today it is socially unacceptable to use a derogatory word for black people, for gays, etc."

Curtis said a better response to hate speech is open dialogue, not restraint or control. "The hope is that dialogue and understanding will do more to promote tolerance than suppression," he argued.

The recent controversy surrounding a Danish newspaper's satirical cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad brings new relevance to the topic. Curtis, a firm believer in freedom of speech, acknowledged, "I feel quite conflicted on this one. Everything you have a right to say is not something that it is right to say. So if the cartoonist had decided that he should not draw such cartoons, I would understand and appreciate his restraint."

"When people express peaceful disapproval of the cartoons, that is free speech at work," Curtis added. (

The Democracy Dialogues webchat on hate speech is part of a global discussion about specific topics in democratic governance. This ongoing project, currently exploring freedom of speech, features webchats, speakers, videos, photos and message boards as resources for democracy.

The next webchat in the series, entitled "Democracy Dialogues: Defamation," features Notre Dame

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## U.S. Envoy Outlines Political Blueprint for Iraq



Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad

The following op-ed by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. ambassador to Iraq, was published February 12

in the Los Angeles Times and is in the public domain. There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

### A Political Blueprint for Iraq

By Zalmay Khalilzad

From the moment the U.S. decided to remove the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein and help Iraqis establish a representative government, one of our key challenges has been enabling the leaders of Iraq's major communities to overcome their mistrust and fear of each other. This has not been easy.

Hussein was skilled at pitting one group against another to strengthen his position. The insurgency and sectarian violence that have plagued Iraq since his downfall have only deepened these divisions. This was reflected in the recent election, in which Iraqis voted largely along ethnic and religious lines.

But now a process is underway to bridge these differences. On Feb. 4, I hosted the leaders of the victorious parties for lunch. The group included Shiite Arab leaders such as Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari; Kurdish leaders such as Massoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan regional government;

and Sunni Arab leaders such as National Assembly Speaker Hakim Hassan and Adnan Dulaimi of the Iraqi Accordance Front. The goal was to start the process of forming a national unity government.

The discussions were often highly emotional. The leaders of each of Iraq's communities strongly feel and express the pain suffered by their people during Iraq's difficult post-Hussein transition. Shiite Arabs expressed bitterness about the hundreds of bombings and suicide attacks that have killed thousands of innocent Iraqis. Sunni Arabs complained about what they see as persecution by the new Iraqi government's security forces. Overcoming these grievances will not be easy, and the bargaining over specific roles in the new government will be tough and often contentious.

Yet this is a moment of opportunity. Thanks in part to systematic outreach efforts by the United States, Sunnis have undergone a sea change in attitude about participating in post-Hussein governance, culminating in their massive turnout in the December elections. They have come to understand that the U.S. is not seeking to occupy their country permanently, and many have been convinced that protracted violence would destroy their country's future.

To build on this progress, Iraq's leaders now need to agree on a process to unite the country.

First, they need to form a government of national unity. This is not a matter of dividing up ministries, with each used to favor the parochial interests of the minister's ethnic or sectarian community or

political faction. Rather, it means selecting ministers from all communities who will build political bridges, who are committed to a unified Iraq and who have demonstrated professional competence. Getting the next government right is far more important than getting it formed fast.

Iraqi leaders also must agree to a decision-making process that gives political minorities confidence that the majority will share power and take their legitimate concerns into account. Iraqi leaders believe that this could be accomplished by forming a council composed of key Iraqi leaders to focus on issues of national importance.

Elected leaders need to govern from the center, not the ideological extremes. This is particularly true in the security area, where the new government must continue increasing the capability of Iraqi security forces while ensuring that Defense and Interior Ministry officials are chosen on the basis of competence, not ethnic or sectarian background. In addition, the government must begin the process of demobilizing the factional militias across the country.

Next, Iraq's leaders need to agree on a true national compact for their country -- a vision and set of political rules that will produce stability and progress. The new constitution gave responsibility to the new national assembly to address several key unresolved questions, including drawing up guidelines for federalizing non-Kurdish regions and dividing responsibilities among various levels of government. In these negotiations, Iraqi leaders must strike agreements that will win greater Sunni Arab support

*(Continued on page 20)*

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## U.S. Wants Rights Abusers Barred from U.N. Human Rights Council

By Carol Walker  
Washington File Staff Writer



Mark Lagon

Washington -- Liberal democracies around the world need to speak out against human rights abuses and not allow "spoilers" to squelch them, a State Department official says.

"It is deplorable when countries like Sudan and Zimbabwe, which lack the will to protect the human rights of their own people, are charged with protecting the human rights of all people," Mark Lagon, deputy assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, told the Congressional Human Rights Caucus February 7.

Lagon updated congressional leaders on the proposed U.N. Human Rights Council, a body he hopes will replace the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

"The Commission on Human Rights has become a safe haven for the world's worst human rights violators, who use their membership to protect themselves from reproach," Lagon said. Sudan, Zimbabwe and Cuba, all countries with poor records on human rights, are members of the current commission.

The proposed new Human Rights Council would include 45 member states elected by a two-thirds ma-

jority vote of the 191-member U.N. General Assembly. Elected country members would be subject to a human-rights review at least once during the three-year term.

"We must do more in order to demonstrate that there are some standards that every country must meet to merit membership in the U.N.'s human rights body," Lagon said. "We support an exclusionary clause that would prohibit human rights violators from serving on the Council, barring countries under U.N. Security Council sanctions for human rights violations or terrorism from the Human Rights Council."

Currently there are 53 members of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, which meets once a year for six weeks in Geneva. More than 3,000 delegates from member and observer states and from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) participate in the Geneva meeting, or "circus," according to William Davis, director of the U.N. Information Center in Washington.

"U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has acknowledged that this fresh start is badly needed," Davis told congressional staff members and leaders. "The Human Rights Council provides an opportunity to restore the United Nations' credibility on human rights."

Lagon said the U.N. reform proposal calls for a Human Rights Council, which would be smaller than the current commission, to meet four times per year for a total of 12 weeks. The proposed panel would be able to be more responsive to human rights violations as

they arise, he added. The United States has donated \$2 million to the United Nations' democracy fund to support the new council. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060126172620sjhtrop0.7530939&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).

Lagon also said the new council must have a mandate on how to deal with gross violators. "There needs to be an option to condemn governments that routinely repress their people."

Davis said he hoped the U.N. General Assembly would vote on the resolution to establish the new Human Rights Council by February 15, so that the existing Human Rights Commission could be replaced in time for the March 13 meeting in Geneva.

In 1947, former U.S. first lady Eleanor Roosevelt was elected chairwoman of the Commission on Human Rights, which authored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Human Rights Day is celebrated around the world on December 10 each year.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*



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## WTO Upholds U.S. Challenge to European Ban on Biotech Food

By Kathryn McConnell  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled preliminarily in favor of the U.S. challenge of the European Union (EU) moratorium on approvals of agricultural crops derived from biotechnology, also known as genetically modified (GM) foods, according to published reports.

The United States, joined by Argentina and Canada in the challenge, had asserted the moratorium violates international trade rules and undermines the development and use of biotechnology.

They had argued the ban was not based on scientific evidence and maintained that biotech crops are as safe to health and the environment as other crops.

All parties now will have a chance to review and comment on the preliminary ruling, which was released February 7 to the U.S. and EU governments and subsequently leaked to the press.

The WTO likely will issue a final decision on the approval challenge in late 2006 or early 2007, a U.S. trade official said in advance of the decision.

The loss of U.S. agricultural sales to Europe because of the ban has amounted to "several hundred millions of dollars" annually, the official said.

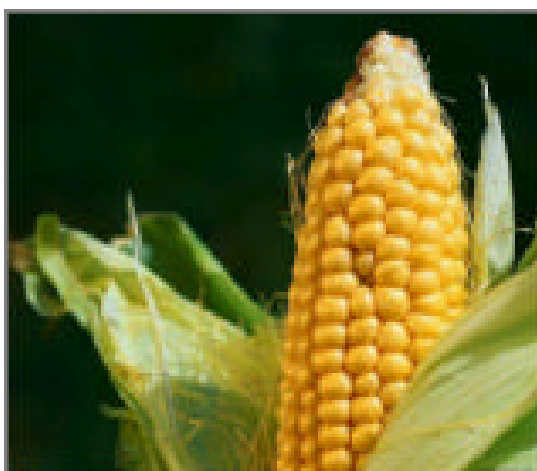
Although EU scientists have found no safety risks on approximately half of the biotech products they have examined, some EU

members still have concerns about the safety of these products.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) also have said there are no greater risks associated with biotech-derived foods than with conventional plants and foods.

### EU REGULATORY SYSTEM INCONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES

The European regulatory system is inconsistent with those used by



other countries to regulate agricultural products that use science to determine a product's safety, the official said.

Biotechnology is a "safe and beneficial technology that is improving food security and helping to reduce poverty worldwide," U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Rob Portman said in a news release issued February 7 soon after reports of the ruling.

Biotech crops with nutritional enhancements like "golden rice" can help the poor around the world by affording them more healthy diets,

a USTR fact sheet says. Golden rice refers to a rice species genetically engineered in the early 1990s to produce the vitamin A precursor beta-carotene, in the hopes the rice could be used as fortified food in areas in which there is a shortage of dietary sources of vitamin A. Vitamin A is an anti-oxidant vitamin important for good vision and bone growth.

In addition, biotech has proven to produce higher-yielding crops, which help farmers around the world meet challenges of harsh climates, disease and pests, and require less water and pesticides, USTR says.

Globally, land planted with biotech crops has increased 50-fold since their commercialization in the mid-1990s. More than 404.7 million hectares (1 billion acres) now are planted in 21 countries around the world, including in five EU countries, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said in the same release.

### DISPUTE HAS TWO ELEMENTS

The dispute resolution case has two elements: a challenge of the moratorium of biotech varieties for sale or use within the EU, and a challenge of individual EU countries' bans of products already approved by the EU.

Twenty-five crops are under dispute in the case. Also at issue is the EU moratorium on accepting new varieties of biotech seed.

"For years the United States refrained from bringing a WTO case

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## WTO Upholds U.S. Challenge to European Ban on Biotech Food . . .

(Continued from page 17)

to give the EU an opportunity to lift the moratorium, as the EU assured us it would. But the EU was not able to overcome political pressures," according to USTR.

Between 1994 and 1997, the EU approved for commercial use several varieties of crops, mostly maize.

In 1997, EU member Austria banned one of those maize varieties and the EU Commission refused to challenge the action. Between 1997 and 2000, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg followed Austria by individually imposing bans on EU-approved crops, bans that went unchallenged by the European Union.

The EU imposed its moratorium on approvals in 1998 and set no deadline for lifting it.

Between 2004 and 2005, the EU Commission began to approve a small number of new biotech crops, but some EU member states still refused to accept those crops.

The commission proposes and administers legislation and is responsible for the implementation of EU treaties and decisions.

The United States brought its challenge to the WTO in 2003. The WTO repeatedly has postponed making a preliminary decision.

By not allowing its approval system to operate, the EU has imposed "undue delays on biotech approvals, resulting in extensive delays and preventing the marketing of many crops grown in the United States," according to USTR.

A final WTO decision would allow the United States to sell large amounts of foods containing biotech ingredients to EU countries, the trade official said.

### CONSUMER RESISTANCE IN EUROPE REMAINS HIGH

Resistance to genetically altered crops among consumers in Europe remains strong, therefore the lifting of the ban might not have a significant effect on the quantity of U.S. agricultural exports to the region.

Influenced by the EU's several-year ban, some developing countries that could benefit greatly from biotech crops have been reluctant to grow them, fearing safety alarms raised by anti-biotech groups. Those countries also have feared they would not be able to export agricultural products grown from biotech seed to European markets.

Consumers safely have been eating nutritious foods that contain biotech-derived ingredients for a decade, according to USTR.

The Portman-Johanns news release ([http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/\\_s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?contentid-only=true&contentid=2006/02/040.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentid-only=true&contentid=2006/02/040.xml)) on agricultural biotechnology and the WTO is available on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Web site.

Fact sheets and additional information on agricultural biotechnology are available on the USTR ([http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Sectors/Agriculture/Biotechnology/Section\\_Index.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Sectors/Agriculture/Biotechnology/Section_Index.html)) and USDA ([http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/\\_s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?)

contentid-only=true&navid=AGRICULTURE&contentid=BiotechnologyFAQs.xml) Web sites. See also the October 2005 State Department electronic journal, *The Promise of Biotechnology* (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/ites/1005/ijee/ijee1005.htm>).

For more information on U.S. trade and economic policy, see USA and the WTO ([http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_issues/WTO.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/WTO.html)).

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

## Combat Hate Speech with Dialogue, . . .

(Continued from page 14)

professor of politics and constitutional law Donald Kommers, who will discuss slander and libel on Monday, February 27, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (1400 GMT).

More information on Democracy Dialogues is available on its Web site (<http://www.democracy.gov/>).

Michael Curtis's biography (<http://www.law.wfu.edu/x1603.xml>) and publications (<http://www.law.wfu.edu/x2993.xml>) may be found on the Wake Forest Law School Web site.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

## U.S. Specialists To Help Nigeria Fight Bird Flu Outbreaks

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. specialists in human and animal health are heading to Nigeria to assist the West African nation contend with outbreaks of avian influenza in commercial poultry operations.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its parent agency, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), confirm that specialists will arrive in Nigeria February 14.

HHS/CDC staff stationed at an ongoing infectious disease program in Kenya will also go to the West African state to assist, according to a statement issued from CDC headquarters in Atlanta February 13.

The U.S. specialists will join an international team whose members are experts from major international health organizations. A veterinary team from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is in place to assess what emergency measures are needed.

### CONTAINMENT IN WEST AFRICA

A February 10 FAO statement emphasized the importance of containment and the need for action to prevent further spread of the H5N1 virus from Kaduna state, where it was first detected in a commercial poultry operation.

The Rome-based organization is urging that the transport of poultry in agriculture commerce be

stopped because the virus is known to spread via the movement of infected birds.

The FAO and the Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are calling on Nigerian authorities to shut down poultry markets in the affected state and its neighbors.

The international organizations also recommend the adoption of disease-surveillance measures in



**Dr. Julius Barnabas examines a farm worker at a health center near the town of Kaduna, Nigeria, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2006.**  
(Ap Photo/Sunday Alamba)

the nations surrounding Nigeria -- Benin, Cameroon Chad, Ghana, Niger and Togo.

"We are aware that veterinary services in Nigeria are in need of international support," said Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer February 8, when the Nigeria outbreak first was reported.

"The animal health infrastructure in the country is facing a big challenge," he added, "and will require outside assistance."

Standard procedures recommended by the international organizations upon detection of contagious animal disease include widespread culling.

Nigerian authorities already have taken that step, reporting the destruction of more than 40,000 animals to the OIE.

Nigeria's minister of agriculture announced that farmers losing animals to culling will be compensated for the property, a statement welcomed by the international organizations. Fear of the economic loss of livestock can give farmers reason to hide their animals from culling operations, allowing the virus to spread.

### VIRUS CONTROL IN ITALY

Italian health officials moved extremely effectively to implement control measures after H5N1 was detected in wild swans in southern Italy.

"The measures are an example of how governments should move to contain the

virus once it is detected," said Juan Lubroth, an official with FAO's animal health division.

A February 13 FAO statement also said no evidence exists that the disease has moved beyond this small population of wild fowl into the domesticated poultry population.

Commercial poultry farms will adopt a regimen to ensure that does not happen by confining poultry to prevent exposure to a dis-

*(Continued on page 20)*

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## U.S. Specialists To Help Nigeria Fight Bird Flu Outbreaks . . .

*(Continued from page 19)*

ease possibly carried by wild birds and by maintaining other hygiene and sanitation standards.

The FAO statement also expressed confidence that European veterinary services and livestock-care methods are sufficient to contain the disease.

The full text (<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000230/index.html>) of the FAO statement is available on the organization's Web site, as are previous statements (<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000088/index.html>) from the Rome-based agency that warned the lack of that experience and capability in Africa, especially eastern Africa, could lead to an explosive spread of disease in animals, and then humans.

### MORE HUMAN CASES

H5N1 is primarily and most significantly an animal disease. But it has infected humans in almost 170

cases, resulting in more than 90 deaths in seven nations.

Even though those numbers have crept steadily upward, epidemiologists call them quite small considering that hundreds of millions of birds and probably millions of humans have been exposed to H5N1 from East Asia through Central Asia, southeastern Europe and now Africa.

H5N1 does not transmit to humans with ease, but health officials warn that it could mutate to develop that capability, setting in motion the conditions for pandemic influenza.

The World Health Organization issued two updates February 13 on the occurrence of avian influenza in humans.

From China comes report of the nation's 12th confirmed human case of the disease in a 20-year-old female farmer from Hunan province who died February 4.

In Indonesia, the ministry of health has confirmed two more human fatalities from H5N1, both in subdistricts of West Java province.

Indonesia has documented 18 deaths from avian influenza since 2005. Of the seven nations to report human cases, only Vietnam has experienced more deaths.

For additional information on the disease and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu ([http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/bird\\_flu.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html)).

The United States has been at the forefront of international activity to contribute to pandemic preparedness. See [pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>) for more information.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

## U.S. Envoy Outlines Political Blueprint for Iraq . . .

*(Continued from page 15)*

and create a near-consensus in favor of the constitution.

Then, Iraq's leaders must forge an understanding with those insurgents who are willing to lay down their arms, join the political process and, perhaps, even enlist in the fight against the terrorists. Many are willing to do so, as evidenced by the clashes between insurgents and terrorists in west-

ern Iraq.

As the insurgents shift away from armed struggle, they are seeking assurances that regional powers will not be allowed to dominate Iraq and that Iraqi leaders will limit de-Baathification to high-ranking officials, integrating all those who did not commit crimes into mainstream society.

Sunni Arab rejectionists are join-

ing the process of building a new and democratic Iraq. This not only opens the door for insurgents to permanently renounce violence and join the political process in order to stabilize Iraq, it also isolates the terrorists who are the enemy of all Iraqis, while setting the stage for the emergence of a strong and independent Iraq.

(end byliner) ♦



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## AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care Rising Under U.S. Program

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Initiatives to expand prevention, care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS are expanding at a steady pace, according to a second annual progress report on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), released by the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator February 8.

"Prevention is the first line of defense," said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as she announced that U.S.-backed prevention programs now reach 42 million people.

Programs to ensure that HIV-positive pregnant women do not pass the virus to their babies have helped more than 3 million women, Rice said, almost 2 million in 2005 alone.

"By the end of last year, the Emergency Plan had expanded treatment in the 15 focus countries to 400,000 people, plus an additional 71,000 individuals worldwide," Rice said. "It is especially worth noting that 60 percent of these new people being treated are women."

The five-year, \$15 billion plan targets disease assistance to the most hard-hit nations, by working to provide immediate assistance but also to help these countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean improve their health care systems and increase their capacity to cope with the epidemic.

In 2005, the United States invested \$2.8 billion in the program,



and has set aside \$3.2 billion for PEPFAR programs in 2006.

The program's treatment component expanded in 2005 to deliver AIDS treatment to 401,000 people in the 15 focus countries, and 471,000 worldwide, according to the report prepared for the U.S. Congress.

Providing care for people living with AIDS and those affected by the disease is PEPFAR's third component. The report says programs now reach almost 3 million people, including 1.2 million orphans and vulnerable children.

U.S. agencies are forming partnerships with local community groups as they work to achieve these goals and enhance their long-term ability to care for the sick and deliver public health services. During a briefing at the State Department, Rice said those arrangements will build a foundation for the future.

"The Emergency Plan is helping to prepare these local partners -- over half a million in 2005 alone," Rice said. "And the effects of this

training will ripple out for decades."

Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias underscored the significance of the partnerships being built for the delivery of health services.

"One of the most exciting developments today is the growing number of people from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean who are stepping up to the challenge of HIV/AIDS," said Tobias.

These community leaders include people who live with the virus, bringing a unique perspective to the delivery of care and services.

"Many are women, overcoming significant obstacles, helping to build a better life for other women, children and men," he said.

"Action Today, Foundation for Tomorrow" highlights progress toward the goals President Bush established when he first outlined the plan, but Rice cautioned that the magnitude of the pandemic will require "decades of hard work ahead."

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/60751.htm>) of the secretary's briefing and the full text (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/60598.pdf>) of the report (PDF, 166 pages) are available on the State Department's Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see HIV/AIDS ([http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/hiv\\_aids.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html)). ♦

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## Webchat Focuses on Report to Congress on AIDS Initiative Results

Washington -- Journalists in a growing number of nations are rising to the challenge of providing accurate information on HIV/AIDS, Dr. Mark Dybul, U.S. deputy global AIDS coordinator, told a State Department hosted online discussion February 10.

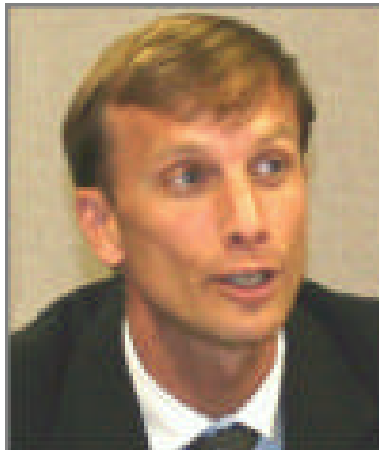
Asked for his impressions on how well the news media is addressing HIV/AIDS, Dybul said that journalists have an important role to play to ensure accurate information is being reported and disseminated widely.

"Yesterday I had an opportunity to talk to journalists from South Africa and Vietnam, and I was impressed by how seriously those journalists took their responsibility to inform their nations on HIV/AIDS. Health journalism is especially important in reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigma, and I want to thank all the journalists who tackle that difficult job," Dybul said.

Dybul said that on February 8, Secretary of State Rice released Action Today, a Foundation for Tomorrow, the second annual report to the U.S. Congress on the results achieved by the President's Emergency Plan AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and its partners in host nations in its first two years of implementation. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Feb/08-89132.html>)).

The five-year, \$15 billion initiative to turn the tide in combating

the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, targets assistance to the most-hard-hit nations. The emergency plan, is providing funds to fight the pandemic, with a special focus on 15 hardest-hit nations, working to provide immediate assistance but also to help these countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean im-



**Dr. Mark Dybul, U.S. Deputy  
Global AIDS Coordinator**

prove their health care systems and increase their capacity to cope with the epidemic.

In 2005, the United States invested \$2.8 billion in the program, and has set aside \$3.2 billion for PEPFAR programs in 2006.

The program's treatment component expanded in 2005 to deliver AIDS treatment to 401,000 people in the 15 focus countries, and 471,000 worldwide, according to the report prepared for the U.S. Congress.

The report says programs now reach almost 3 million people, including 1.2 million orphans and vulnerable children.

"The results these partnerships have been able to achieve so far are impressive," Dybul said, encouraging the webchat participants to read the report, available on the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (<http://www.state.gov/s/gac/>) Web site.

One participant, an official at the U.S. Embassy in Maseru, Lesothu, said "One of the relatively new de-

velopments" that Peace Corps volunteers in Lesotho have seen in the field is the organization of HIV/AIDS support groups in larger camp towns. These organizations are made up of and supported by groups of HIV positive members.

Calling this development "tremendously encouraging," Dybul hailed courageous people living with HIV/AIDS who, he said, are "increasingly, leaders in the fight against the disease. They are overcoming stigma and contributing in many ways."

He noted that groups of people living with the virus "can help implementers design the most appropriate and responsive interventions. So our U.S. Government teams are reaching out to such groups, including them in program design and implementation, and providing funding for a growing number of groups in order to build their capacity."

U.S. agencies are forming partnerships with local community groups as they work to achieve these goals and enhance their long-term ability to care for the sick and deliver public health services.

Information on upcoming webchats (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>) and a transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Feb/10-730785.html>) of the online discussion with Dybul are available on the USINFO Webchat Station Web site.

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## Meet August Wilson, a Playwright for an American Century . . .

*(Continued from page 8)*

Wilson's works gave rise to exceptional acting talent -- familiar names like James Earl Jones and Angela Bassett and newly arrived actors like Charles S. Dutton and Viola Davis, who thrived within his world.

"It's hard for an actor to go wrong if he's true to the words August Wilson has written," Jones said a few years ago. Citing his own portrayal of the protagonist in *Fences* on Broadway, he noted that "the speeches simply guided themselves; they're so well constructed. August was a poet before he became a playwright, and poetry is still part of the language his characters speak."

Poet and playwright, shaper of memorable characters and hauntingly woven tapestries, Wilson was, at his core, a chronicler of his times. He presented the annals of American life as he saw them, from his vantage point, through the eyes of those who inhabited his community.

"Jazz in itself is not struggling," he said. "It's the attitude that's in trouble. My plays insist that we should not forget or toss away our history."

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

## Proposed Military Budget Focuses on Speed, Agility, War on Terror . . .

*(Continued from page 9)*

Additional information about the 2007 budget request is available on the Defense Department Web site.

A summary ([http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2006/d20060206\\_Budget\\_Rollout.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2006/d20060206_Budget_Rollout.pdf)) of the Defense Department budget roll out and additional information (<http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2007/index.html>) about the fiscal 2007 budget request are available on the department's Web site.

### **BUDGET REQUEST COINCIDES WITH QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW**

This is the first year that the annual defense budget and the Quadrennial Defense Review are being sent to Congress at the same

time. The Quadrennial Defense Review, which describes the administration's global military goals, is mandated by Congress to be issued every four years. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jan/13-829025.html>).

This QDR is the first one to be issued while the United States has been fully engaged in the global war on terrorism. It draws upon lessons learned in the fight against terrorism in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This is also the first time two QDRs have been released during the same administration. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=February&x=20060203180753mvyel-war0.4041559&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).

Previous QDRs were sent to Congress in 2001 and 1997.

Navy Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Council on Foreign Relations that the QDR is a key element in directing the Defense Department. In made January 30 but embargoed until the budget documents and QDR were sent to Congress, the admiral said the review "sets a clear vector for the kind of military capabilities we will need to address the security challenges in an uncertain future."

For additional informational about U.S. policy, see International Security (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/>).

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